

Runkel stumps for 'last, best hope'

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

State aid to schools needs to be better indexed to local costs of doing business, according to the man in charge of the Proposal A campaign.

"There's a higher cost of doing business in some areas," said Philip Runkel, former state school costs administrator. "Some indexing is needed. It will be done by the Legislature next year. That will help the metropolitan area. Runkel told the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Friday.

Runkel, a Democrat recruited for the campaign by Republican Gov. John Engler, was asked by Oakland County Commissioner David Moffitt, R-Farmington Hills, if Proposal A could have been better. Runkel said yes.

"Proposal A would cut property taxes from their 1992 average of 24.6 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 18.75 cents per \$100. Low millage rates would be maintained. Higher rates would be

PROPOSAL A

would amount to \$2,000 over several years.

Suburban critics

Suburban critics have hit this portion of Proposal A because school costs are higher in the metropolitan Detroit suburbs. Suburban districts pay more for teachers salaries, home construction, medical care and insurance than the metropolitan area.

A rival legislative proposal by Sen. Jack Favara, D-Farmington Hills, would have divided the state into six cost-of-living business zones, with varying amounts of aid. Favara's proposal died in committee without debate.

Runkel said that the state would amend the state constitution to guarantee every school district in the state \$4,000 per pupil. For some rural districts, the increase

invited in the metropolitan Detroit suburbs.

Public Sector Consultants, a Lansing-based think tank, led Runkel's team of consultants. Runkel also predicted "some internal warfare" for shares of the state budget between schools and competing interests if Proposal A fails.

And he predicted the Legislature will support the sales tax to move items through and food and prescription drugs if Proposal A fails.

No income tax hike

Runkel, now a vice president of Kemper Securities in Lansing, said he would have preferred the state shift to an income tax increase to support schools, rather than a 5-cent hike in the sales tax. This, he noted, is the only way to avoid a political fight.

"An income tax won't be passed or signed in the next two years," he said.

Although Proposal A is barely ahead in the polls, Runkel said he has "the broadest support any ballot proposal in this state," he said. "This is our last chance. This is the best I've seen in my years in Michigan."

Runkel, who had been superintendent of Uta schools before taking the state post during Gov. James Blanchard's administration.

"Proposal A may be the last, best hope for fixing school finance and the state tax imbalance," agreed FSCA's Kline.

If Proposal A fails, Runkel predicted, state lawmakers will reduce state aid to wealthy suburban districts and shift the cost of social security and pensions from Lansing to local schools — the so-called "Robin Hood" approach that Runkel says is going after suburban

OU's new veeep brings experience

If his list of developed projects is any indication, Oakland University's new vice president for finance and administration is a keeper.

Paul E. Blaszczak, 50, was recommended for the position by OU President Oakland University President Sandra Park and recently approved by the OU Board of Trustees.

Blaszczak's resume included superior professional training and experience as well as his personal leadership skills. His previous experience, particularly in the area of construction and finance, and his enthusiasm and creativity will be great assets to the university.

He will also serve as treasurer to the board and begin both duties by mid-July. He has been executive assistant to the president for administration and financial development at the University of California at San Diego since 1982.

Blaszczak replaced Ray Harris, who served as president of finance and administration and housing since 1982.

While at Cal State, Fresno, Blaszczak served as executive assistant to the president for administration and financial development (July, 1972 to present) responsible for the development of physical development and planning public safety, environmental, shipbuilding and environmental ship operations, parking, and div-



Paul E. Blaszczak

Q and A Readers probe specifics about Proposal A

Q. Will the sales tax increase revenue go into the school fund or somewhere else?

A. Into the school aid fund. Proposal A is a constitutional amendment that continues all the new sales tax revenue for schools, too. All lottery proceeds would be earmarked for schools.

The sales tax increase would be levied beginning July 15 but would be dedicated until Oct. 1. For two and a half months, it would go into the state general fund.

Q. Why does the state law say the state will share half the cost of teacher retirement?

A. The law says the state will share half the cost of teacher retirement. The law also says the state will share half the cost of teacher retirement. The law also says the state will share half the cost of teacher retirement.

Q. I'm a pastor and half my salary goes to rent. What's in Proposal A for me?

A. A meeting specific. Your local property taxes would be reduced. Maybe he would reduce your rent. Ask him.

If the market forces of supply and demand work, the landlord will reduce your rent voluntarily.

Q. I'm 79 and retired. I get the \$1,200 homebased property tax rebate. How will it be applied to Proposal A?

A. Yes, said Sen. Dan DeFrow, R-Port Huron. It covers the school's fiscal year, July 1 to June 30.

Q. My district collects a millage for construction bonds. Will it be cut, too?

A. No. Bonds are a lien against property and these taxes can't be cut by a ballot proposal.

Female leaders have own style

Women bring a unique leadership style to their positions, says one woman leader.

In a recent speech to a Women in Leadership Forum, Oakland University President Sandra Park cited a survey by the American Council on Education showing that 100 percent of female presidents in higher education are going on right now. There are more than 530 women presidents in 2,000 institutions of higher education today.

Although women presidents remain outnumbered by their male counterparts, the balance is shifting. Women are assuming vice-presidential, dean, and directorships across the country.

She suggested team building and networking for women wanting to advance in their careers.

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Belle Isle attracts fans

Grand Prix race on Sunday.

Race fans range in age and social backgrounds, from high-powered businessmen and women to fishermen and some living remnants of past generations of racing fans.

"The structure of Indy car racing seems to stem from local race fans who are not interested in the success of the race," commented McCabe.

"The diversity of the audience helps explain why the race is so popular. It's a major role in the success of the race," McCabe says.

McCabe says the race has continued to be as successful in past years.

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